



USAID | HONDURAS
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Agricultural Diversification—an Alternative to Illegal Migration

MONTE REDONDO, Honduras—

The Amador family was down on its luck. With five sons and their growing families, Don Felipe and his wife could barely eke out a living on the land they farmed.

Crops were at the whim of the elements, often suffering from disease and too much rain. "Before, it was simply a disaster," one of the Amador brothers said, remembering how difficult life had been.

With the same arid land, however, the Amador's neighbor, Paulino Raudales, seemed to be doing just fine. In fact, more than fine—he was producing far beyond his needs and selling to grocery stores in the nearby capital city of Tegucigalpa. His secret: USAID's Rural Economic Diversification Project, or RED.



Tomato crop production in Honduras.
Photo by USAID/Honduras

RED aims to help vulnerable communities in Honduras, said Eduardo Chirrinós, the project's coordinator. According to the United Nations human development index, these are the communities most prone to food insecurity, with low nutrition rates, and limited access to education and health services. The RED project, however, does not simply give to the poor—it addresses food insecurity by increasing income. Instead of calling recipients of its assistance "beneficiaries," the project deals with farmers as "clients," teaching them the needed steps to maximize productivity of their land, diversify their crops, and access markets both near and far.

The Amador family had tried everything. RED was their last hope. Raudales recommended the family get in touch with the RED technical advisor assigned to the region, Marco Nunez. The Amador family learned to use the right chemicals to lower the risk of crop disease, and to plant their crops in a way that protected them from the elements. Before too long, with some training and technical assistance, the land began to yield the crops: tomatoes, cucumbers, and chiles. Production went up, and so did the family's sales to the local markets.

"We were planning to go *mojado* [emigrate illegally] to the United States," one of the brothers admitted, "but this program gave us a reason to stay." Things at the Amadors' home look a lot different today. The dirt floor in the house has been replaced with a cement floor, and the broken down warehouse has been repaired. "We now have trust in our land because we know it will produce," said Felipe Amador. .